

# Environment Victoria News

MOBILISING PEOPLE TO SAFEGUARD OUR ENVIRONMENT

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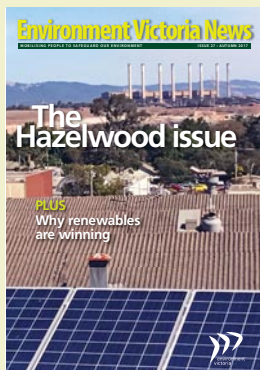
## The Hazelwood issue

**PLUS**

Why renewables  
are winning







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## Editorial

**Mark Wakeham, Chief Executive Officer**

**Anyone hoping for a quiet start to 2017 will have been disappointed!**

**As you'll see in the pages ahead, it's all been happening.**

### AS YOU RECEIVE THIS EDITION OF

Environment Victoria News, Hazelwood power station, our campaign target for over a decade, is no longer polluting – newly closed after half a century of operation. Thank you for your incredible support for this campaign over so many years. Hazelwood's closure is a major milestone on the journey to an economy powered by renewable energy. At the same time, there is still a lot of work to do to make sure that the Hazelwood site is properly rehabilitated and that the Latrobe Valley community secures new, sustainable investment and jobs. We're committed to following through on this work while also making sure that Hazelwood's closure is the catalyst for an urgently needed national plan to retire

our ageing coal-burning power stations and support affected communities.

And who's been enjoying the renewable energy wars? There's an old saying: "First they ignore you, then they laugh at you, then they fight you, then you win." I feel we are somewhere between the third and fourth stages, as I outline in my article on page three.

We're starting to see some really strong progress on climate change in Victoria, with a new Climate Change Act, upcoming renewable energy auctions bringing thousands of new jobs to regional Victoria, and almost daily good news stories about new energy-efficiency or renewable-energy projects. We are also seeing outcomes for our natural environment, and we're hopeful

that in coming months we'll have tougher environmental laws, a stronger Environment Protection Authority and a new national park to protect the home of the critically endangered Leadbeaters possum.

This progress is fragile, though. In recent months, the Victorian opposition has lurched to the right and now opposes nearly all of these measures. We've got a clear task ahead of us to celebrate the wins, accelerate the transformation, and make sure all Victorians know who is trying to prevent climate and environment protection.

Enjoy all the news this edition, and thank you for your support and belief that together we can create a better world.

# Why renewables are winning



Mark Wakeham, Chief Executive Officer

**THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MIGHT** have started a final, desperate war on renewable energy, but outside the political bubble it's clear we're in the dying days of the fossil fuel era. What makes me so sure?

It's not the absurd sight of a national Treasurer fondling a lump of coal in parliament, or the 'truth overboard' attempts to blame renewable energy for everything from South Australian blackouts to arrested production at Alcoa's Portland aluminium smelter. It's not even the parade of Coalition politicians, state and federal, promising to scrap renewable energy targets or bankroll new coal-burning power stations. Powerful industries like coal, oil and gas will always have their political backers.

No, clean energy is winning because of three external factors – decisive financial markets, viral growth models and overwhelming community support.

First, capital markets have already decided the future is clean energy. For three years in a row, there's been more investment globally in renewables than in fossil-fuel power stations. And the gap is growing. In 2015, \$286 billion was invested globally in renewable power projects, more than double the \$130 billion in coal and gas power stations.

In the US, 94 coal-burning power stations closed in 2015 and another 41 last year. Even Donald Trump can't stop this tide – another six have announced their closure since he was elected.

Australia's not immune to this trend. The recently retired Hazelwood is the ninth coal power station to close in the past five years. Last year, Australia retired 520 megawatts of coal and built 1100 megawatts of renewable energy. This year, at least 1640 megawatts of coal will exit and more than 3000 megawatts of renewables will be built. This shift is only heading in one direction.

Second, renewables have decentralised, viral funding models,

making them more nimble than large, expensive fossil-fuel projects. Each week, there's another market where it's cheaper to build wind or solar than coal or gas. The result is a stampede of capital to clean energy. The ageing coal generators are like the last mature specimens of a once-dominant breed, unable to reproduce and therefore doomed to extinction.

In developed countries like Australia, new coal-burning power stations are 'unbankable'. No wonder the Turnbull government is considering desperate measures such as lending them public money.

Renewables projects, meanwhile, are financed by families and businesses trying to save on their energy bills. Last year in Australia, the equivalent of 14 solar panels were installed for every minute of daylight. This year it will be more. As coal generators lose customers and hike prices to recoup costs, more and more people will go solar or add batteries, creating a death spiral for electricity retailers.

Third, renewable energy is enormously popular across the political spectrum. A



A longer version of this article was published in the *Saturday Age* on 10 March 2017

Sustainability Victoria poll recently found 84 percent of Victorians support the state's target of 40 percent renewable energy by 2025. Even in the conservative Queensland seat of Dawson, a poll found most voters support a 50 percent national renewable energy target by 2030. Only 28 percent oppose it.

Since being elected in 2013, the federal Coalition has sat on their hands and watched as seven coal power stations have closed, leaving communities to deal with the aftermath. Only with Hazelwood's closure has there been modest, though late, financial support to diversify the Latrobe Valley economy. It's not good enough – a responsible government would have a plan to retire Australia's remaining coal-burning power stations while supporting affected communities.

The Coalition needs to peek above the political trenches and see clean energy has already won. Instead of fighting against the future, we need politicians and business leaders who will embrace it and the accompanying jobs and investment. And if we're going to be 100 percent powered by renewables, let's do it by 2030 and play our part in halting the worst impacts of global warming.

It's time for the Prime Minister to declare the war on renewables lost. If politicians keep fighting yesterday's battles they'll make themselves redundant too.





# Hazelwood's closure shows must plan ahead for climate



## WHEN HAZELWOOD STOPPED

generating electricity last month, it was the first power station to close, at least in part, because of climate change.

Hazelwood's closure brings the total to nine coal power stations in Australia that have retired in the last five years – including the Port Augusta power stations in South Australia, the Munmorah and Wallerawang power stations in New South Wales and the smaller Energy Brix and Anglesea power stations in Victoria. It's a clear indication the global industrial transition from coal to renewable energy across the world has reached our shores.

Like all such transitions, this one will involve a big upheaval for the affected workers, but never before has an industrial transition had so much else at

stake. Never before has the end of one industry been so essential to the wellbeing of the rest of society.

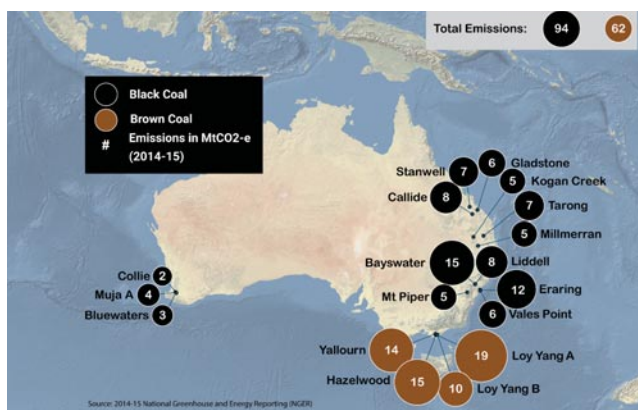
Burning coal for electricity accounts for a third of Australia's greenhouse gas pollution. It is the country's largest single source of carbon dioxide, and it's likely to be the easiest to reduce – cutting climate pollution from more diffuse sectors such as transport and agriculture will be more challenging.

Globally, the International Energy Agency identified phasing out inefficient coal power stations as a key plank in any effective global agreement on climate change. Domestically, the Australian Energy Market Operator has estimated we would need to close the equivalent of another five large coal power stations (a total of about 8700MW of capacity) by

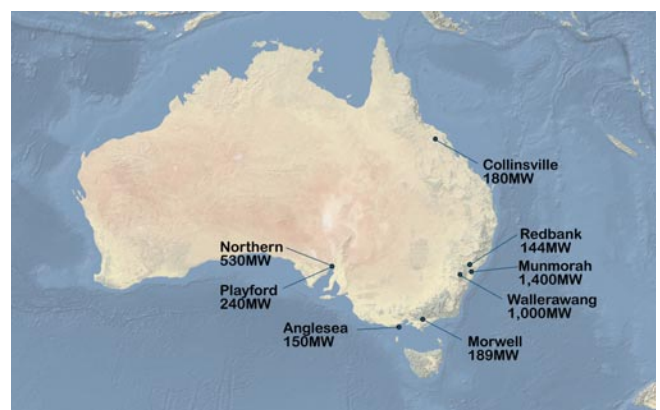
2030 in order to meet even the Turnbull government's manifestly weak climate targets. Targets more in line with keeping global warming under 2°C involve closing one Hazelwood-sized power station each year from now on.

While coal generators have been closing, they have not necessarily been closing in a way that serves local communities: the closures at those nine power stations in the past five years have given workers an average of just four months' notice from announcement to turning off the boilers. For communities where coal is a large part of the regional economy, this is too little notice.

But neither have they been closing in the best way for our climate. Economics has driven decisions. Unprofitable generators – the lame animal in the



Coal power stations in Australia before the closure of Hazelwood.



Recent coal power stations that have closed in Australia, excluding Hazelwood.

# industry and government change



Dr Nicholas Aberle Campaigns Manager

moving pack that is the National Electricity Market – have stumbled and fallen quite suddenly, but these power stations aren't necessarily the worst or biggest polluters.

A Senate inquiry into the retirement of coal-fired power stations, due to report this week, provides an opportunity to move the public debate beyond political blame games and into the realm of responsible policymaking. In recent months, green groups, business groups, unions and even the energy industry itself have called for a greater government role in planning the phase-out of coal-burning power stations.

For communities, knowing when a power station will close gives much-needed impetus to diversify the regional economy. While Hazelwood's closure came with just five months' notice, the state and federal governments have pulled together transition plans worth over \$300m. Time will tell whether this is sufficient to smoothen the local impacts, but repeating this level of funding for the remaining 20 coal generators could mean finding \$6bn in government budgets in coming years.

For clean-energy investors, knowing when a power station will close gives confidence about when new renewables projects will be needed. A timeline for the retirement of Australia's remaining fleet of coal-burning power stations would provide this certainty. There's a compelling case that to avoid energy

market chaos, we need to set closure dates from now until 2030.

Even some big power companies are on board. AGL, owner of three large coal power stations, has previously advocated for setting 50-year lifetime limits on each generator. Energy Australia recently argued that companies should be required to provide much earlier notice of when their own generators will close.

As of next week, Energy Australia's Yalourn power station in Victoria's Latrobe Valley will be the dirtiest coal generator in the country, and one of the oldest. The company's public position that it will remain open until 2032 seems unlikely at best and deceptive at worst – a deception that has consequences for workers, communities and energy markets. Scepticism is warranted: Hazelwood's owners gave the same 2032 closure date just months before announcing the power station would bow out in March 2017.

Last month the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority warned that companies need to appropriately manage their exposure to climate risks, effectively putting the owners of coal-burning power stations on notice. Telling shareholders an asset might be open for another 15 years when a much shorter life is likely, or even possible, could have serious legal consequences.

We don't have to choose between coal power and renewables – community attitudes and energy markets have already decided. The choices now are about speed and justice. Will this industrial transition be fast enough to avoid the worst risks to our climate, and fair enough to sustain regional communities? Will it be chaotic and disruptive, or planned and orderly?

Hazelwood stops generating this week, but these questions will linger until we finally have a national, long-term plan to phase out Australia's remaining coal-burning power stations.

This article was originally published in *The Guardian* on 29 March 2017



## INTRODUCING ANICA NIEPRASCHK, CLIMATE CAMPAIGNER

Growing up in the powerhouse of East Germany, the Lausitz region, I lived just one kilometre from a coal mine and close to some of Germany's most polluting coal-fired power stations. After a massive economic and social transition, the Lausitz is transforming into a tourist region, with mines being rehabilitated into recreational lakes, changing the landscape and lifestyles radically – and positively.

Seeing this transition happen gives me confidence that it can be done in the Latrobe Valley as well, and that a brighter future is ahead. I am excited to campaign for a sustainable transition away from coal, and to support affected communities as we create a new, green economy.

## THANK YOU

The long-running Replace Hazelwood campaign was supported by tens of thousands of people like you over more than a decade. Thank you.



# Just transitions



**Cat Nadel**  
Safe Climate Campaigner

**Hazelwood power station's closure on 29 March 2017 marked a huge step on Victoria's journey to zero climate pollution, reduced by 16 million tonnes per year almost instantly.**

**BUT THE DAY ALSO MARKED A** turning point for the Latrobe Valley community. As recently as 2016, Hazelwood's owners had told workers that the plant would stay open until 2025.

Hazelwood's closure is not a freak event. In the last five years, nine other power stations have closed, with workers being given an average of four months notice. In almost all of those cases very little support or warning was offered to the workers and communities.

There's another way. It's called a 'Just Transition', and it's a way of managing economic change that doesn't pit workers against the environment. It requires a managed plan to transform Australia to a low emissions economy in a way that is fair for communities and workers.

It means planning for new clean energy and creating jobs in more diverse, resilient local economies. It only works if local communities and affected workers are meaningfully involved in developing the solutions.

In the case of Hazelwood, a few positive steps along this path have recently been taken. These include:

- 150 workers promised jobs at other power stations. The Victorian government negotiated a redeployment scheme so younger Hazelwood workers will retain employment. The scheme allows older workers at AGL's Loy Yang A power station to take early retirement packages, and younger Hazelwood workers to take on those roles.
- 230 Hazelwood workers will be kept on for years to rehabilitate the mine site and decommission the power



**Luke van der Meulen, a former Latrobe Valley coal industry union worker, at the Earthworker renewable energy manufacturing cooperative in the Latrobe Valley. Find out more about Earthworker cooperative and pledge your support at [earthworkercooperative.com.au/ev-pledge](http://earthworkercooperative.com.au/ev-pledge)**

station. Hazelwood owner Engie has confirmed that the vast majority of these tasks will be done by the local workforce.

- State government investment is creating hundreds of new jobs in the Latrobe Valley, including through energy efficiency upgrades for the homes of 1000 low-income and vulnerable residents – a policy proposed by Environment Victoria last year.
- The Latrobe Valley Authority continues to oversee long-term industrial transition, ensuring local people are properly engaged in the process, and
- Engie has committed to ongoing community consultation about the future of the mine site.

There is obviously a still a long way to go in supporting the Latrobe Valley to continue to diversify its economy, and much of this planning should have started in earnest many years ago.

However these positive steps demonstrate that there are ways to transition the energy sector that put the interests of workers and communities on equal par with environmental imperatives.

This is one of the many ways that Hazelwood's closure demonstrates a turning point in Australian climate and energy policy.

There is broad support for continuing this type of 'Just Transitions' approach as part of a national energy transition plan.

Last year, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) launched a discussion paper titled *A Just Transition for Coal-fired Electricity Sector Workers and Communities*. Speaking at an event organised by Environment Victoria, ACTU chief of staff Ben Davidson emphasised that the Turnbull government had an obligation to "plan and manage the transition to a clean energy economy in a way that doesn't leave workers and communities like the Latrobe Valley behind."

Energy giants AGL and EnergyAustralia have both also called for governments to manage transition in the energy market.

Many dedicated local groups and individuals in the Latrobe Valley have been working for years to seed new industry and generate hope for the future of the region. Their efforts, and the turning point that Hazelwood marks, demonstrate that a future of fair work, clean air and a liveable climate are possible.

Making this vision a reality will require resources, long term planning and leadership from our state and federal politicians, as well as a commitment from broader society to achieving a Just Transition.

# Repower Victoria



**Jane Stabb**  
Community Organiser Manager

**This year, our community organising team is joining forces with other environment groups for an exciting new campaign to Repower Victoria, starting from the ground up.**



**IN THE FACE OF ATTACKS ON CLEAN** energy from the federal government, the Victorian opposition and the coal lobby, we need to mobilise support in our communities. To do this, we're building power right across the national energy grid.

Environment Victoria has teamed up with environment groups in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia to build community campaigns that offer a path to a cleaner future. The idea is to repower our towns and suburbs as a way of putting pressure on politicians who are getting in the way of clean energy.

With climate change happening before our eyes and federal and state elections in sight, it's crucial that communities take action at the local level. It's a great way of combating the misinformation and scare campaigns and showing politicians that attacking renewable energy is a losing strategy.

Along with our friends at 350.org, the NSW Conservation Council, the Australian Conservation Foundation and

others, we're building and supporting Repowering communities across the east coast. The idea came from cutting-edge US research showing that movements, not organisations, drive social change. When the researchers looked at campaigns that had been truly transformative, they found that what set them apart was their ability to mobilise community networks, which were supported rather than led by formal organisations.

So we've come up with a cracking campaign that we think can transform the political narrative around clean energy and build power from the ground up. Our aim is to use strong community support at the local level to deter political parties from mounting ideological attacks on renewable energy.

In Frankston, for example, our Repower group has started planning already. The first stage of the campaign is for groups to repower a local institution, and they've decided that their target will be either the local shopping centre or the Frankston RSL.

At the shopping centre, they're looking at who influences management. Is it the customers or the shop tenants? Do local managers control energy procurement? At the RSL, they're investigating the organisation's views on clean energy.

Once the team has picked a target and planned their campaign, they'll recruit new volunteers. They'll reach out to friends, co-workers and community networks, as well as Environment Victoria local supporters.

And then they'll start the campaign. They might run petitions and stalls to show support for repowering their chosen institution within their community. They could set meetings with decision makers. And if they meet opposition, they'll plan an escalation – perhaps running events out the front or getting an article in the local newspaper.

The group will keep going until their target has repowered by switching to clean energy, improving its energy efficiency or installing solar panels.

Then it's our job to help them (and our local supporters) become Repower Champions, building political pressure on their local state and federal MPs to provide strong leadership on clean energy.

Together, these local campaigns will inspire tens of thousands of people. We'll have built and supported Repower teams across four states, with committed, trained and organised volunteer groups sticking up for clean energy in election-deciding towns and suburbs.

This way, we'll make sure renewable energy has such deep and lasting support that all politicians will back it. And that the solutions to climate change are getting fast-tracked, not road-blocked.

**Jane is going on maternity leave this month and will be replaced by Taegen Edwards. We wish Jane all the best and welcome Taegen!**

**If you want to get involved, you can start your own Repower group, join an existing group, or join one of our central support teams. Get in touch by emailing [a.neale@environmentvictoria.org.au](mailto:a.neale@environmentvictoria.org.au)**



# LOOKING BACK

For more than a decade, Environment Victoria has been working with Victorian communities to replace Hazelwood. Hazelwood's owners finally announced that it would close in March 2017. Here are six key moments in the campaign.

**May 2005**

## HAZELWOOD EXPOSED AS AUSTRALIA'S DIRTIEST POWER STATION

In May 2005, we released a report that showed that Hazelwood was the least efficient power station in Australia, and its pollution intensity was increasing.

In July, a report from WWF found Hazelwood was the most polluting power station in a major industrialised country. These efforts were part of our campaign to prevent the Bracks Labor government from giving Hazelwood access to new coalfields.



**2010–2011**

## TWO BROKEN PROMISES TO REPLACE HAZELWOOD

In early 2010, more than 5000 people rallied in Melbourne calling on the Victorian and federal governments to replace Hazelwood with clean energy. The campaign was reinforced with giant billboards around Melbourne, big news stories, government lobbying and community protests around the state.

By mid-2010, we had secured a commitment from the Brumby Labor government to retire one-quarter of the polluting power station. However Labor lost the election in November 2010 and the new Baillieu government backed away from the commitment.

We kept up the pressure, and in 2011 the federal Labor government promised to use funds from the carbon price to retire Hazelwood. Unfortunately, they also promised the power companies billions in carbon price "compensation". Our analysis, which made the front page of national newspapers, later found that this is what led to closure negotiations with the power station owner ultimately failing.

**2014**

## HAZELWOOD CATCHES FIRE AND BURNS FOR 45 DAYS



In February 2014, the coal mine that supplies Hazelwood power station caught fire and burned out of control for 45 days, covering the homes of more than 15,000 people in toxic coal ash for weeks.

We worked with locals in the Latrobe Valley to bring this pollution disaster to national attention. We called for an inquiry into the fire and released a report by Harvard University researchers exposing the hidden health costs of Hazelwood. When two inquiries were finally held into the fire, we appeared at both, cross-examining government regulators and executives of Engie, the mine owners. Our intervention helped to place mine rehabilitation on the agenda, and we petitioned Engie to pay its firefighting bill to the Country Fire Authority.



# ON HAZELWOOD

with clean energy and support the Latrobe Valley in a transition to more sustainable industries. In November,

**April 2016**

## MAKING SURE MINE OWNERS CLEAN UP THEIR MESS

In 2014, we learnt that the fire at Hazelwood mine hadn't affected rehabilitated areas that had been covered with clay and soil. This was the beginning of a two-year campaign to improve rehabilitation of coal mines in Victoria. Working closely with Environmental Justice Australia, we sought to answer an important question: what will happen to these huge holes in the ground when mining finishes?

At the 2014 inquiry into the Hazelwood mine fire, we learnt that the cost of rehabilitation would be much, much greater than the meagre \$15 million rehabilitation bond held by the government. Through community meetings, reports and polling, we helped make mine rehabilitation a big issue in the Latrobe Valley – and a key test for the 2014 state election.

The incoming Andrews government agreed to reopen the Hazelwood inquiry, and went on to increase rehabilitation bonds across the three mines by \$210 million, with further increases foreshadowed. The government also pledged \$51 million for health and air pollution monitoring and \$40 million to support economic transition in the Latrobe Valley.

**May 2016**

## FRENCH ENERGY MINISTER COMMITS TO 'DISENGAGE' FROM HAZELWOOD

Hazelwood is mainly owned by French company Engie, whose biggest shareholder is the French government. So the French have quite a big say in what happens to the power station.

In late 2015, as the world's attention turned to France for the Paris climate talks, thousands of Environment Victoria supporters signed postcard petitions to the French government urging it to phase out Hazelwood. In May 2016 the postcards were handed to the French energy minister on French national TV. In response, the minister announced on air that Engie would 'disengage' from Hazelwood.



**July 2016**

## ANZ ENDS ITS LOAN TO HAZELWOOD

In 2014, just months after the Hazelwood mine fire, the ANZ Bank handed the company a loan of US\$147 million. The loan was due to be renewed in June 2016. In the months before, thousands of people contacted ANZ urging that the loan not be renewed. Customers with accounts and home loans worth \$37 million threatened to leave the bank. ANZ did not renew the loan.



Together we've been calling for Hazelwood to be phased out for more than 10 years, and now we've made that happen. This is a huge step towards cutting pollution and making the shift to clean energy. Whether you've been part of this from the beginning or just got involved,

## THANK YOU!





The Long-nosed Bandicoot, pictured above, is still relatively common, but four other bandicoot species are listed as threatened in Victoria. PHOTO: FLICKR CC, CREATIVE PIXELS

# The road to extinction — a tale of five bandicoots



**Juliet Le Feuvre**  
Healthy Rivers Campaigner

**BANDICOOTS ARE SMALL, SOLITARY** marsupials. They forage at night using their long, sensitive noses to smell out food, leaving behind small round 'snout pokes' to mark their exploration. They're highly active, making little grunts when they find food and shrill squeaks when disturbed.

During the day, they sleep in camouflaged nests – shallow holes lined with grass, leaf litter and other debris. To waterproof their hideouts, they kick a layer of soil over the top of the nest when it rains.

Bandicoots play an important ecological role. They turn over soil,

speeding up the decomposition of leaf litter to cycle nutrients and produce new soil, and they help to disperse the spores of fungi. Losing bandicoots from the landscape (along with other small marsupials such as potoroos) has cascading effects on plant diversity, species composition and the structure of forests and woodlands.

In the 1800s, Victoria was home to five species of these endearing and useful animals. One species, the Long-nosed bandicoot, is still relatively common. The other four are all listed as threatened under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act, but for different reasons.

The Southern brown bandicoot used to be widespread across Victoria but is now increasingly restricted due to habitat loss. It has been steadily disappearing from the Mornington Peninsula, much to the dismay of local residents, and is being pushed further and further out by Melbourne's ever-increasing urban sprawl. With numbers being further reduced by foxes and cats, it will soon be in need of predator-proof fencing to keep its remaining habitat secure.

Which is exactly the predicament of Victoria's third bandicoot species, the Eastern barred bandicoot. This little



creature is extinct in the wild, only surviving through a captive breeding program co-ordinated by Zoos Victoria. Eastern barred bandicoots have been reintroduced at three fenced sites and on Churchill Island. Maremma dogs are now being trained to protect them from predators. Fingers crossed the Eastern barred bandicoot can be brought back from the brink, but it will require a huge, sustained effort.

It's too late to save the other two species, the Pig-footed bandicoot and the Western barred bandicoot, which are both extinct.

So what can we do to get the Long-nosed and the others off the seemingly inevitable road to extinction?

The first step is strong laws to protect nature.

Victoria's Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act is under review. Along with our friends at Environmental Justice Australia and the Victorian National Parks Association, we are pushing for five key reforms:

- A fair go for threatened species with no exemptions or special treatment for government departments or particular industries
- Stronger stop and protect powers so the minister can intervene when important species or habitats are under serious threat
- A nature cop on the beat with strong enforcement, real penalties and proper monitoring
- Clear targets and timelines to direct investment and co-ordinate programs for threatened species protection and recovery
- Community power to act, including the ability to initiate legal action to protect threatened species.

You can help by letting your local MP know that we need these reforms to give Victoria's bandicoots and other threatened species a chance. Find out more at [environmentvictoria.org.au/strong-nature-laws](http://environmentvictoria.org.au/strong-nature-laws)

## THANK YOU

**Thank you to everyone who is supporting our campaign to act on extinction. Together we can protect our precious threatened plants and animals.**

## Helping the Blue-banded bee save an endangered plant



PHOTO: WIKICOMMONS CC 3.0, BY VENGOLIS.

Blue-banded bees are one of the few insects that can pollinate the endangered Matted flax-lily, which lives along the Merri Creek. Unfortunately, the bees can only fly 300 metres at a time, and the flax-lily populations in Fawkner and Reservoir have become so thinned out that the bees can't travel from one to the next.

So the Friends of Merri Creek have raised over \$25,000 to establish pollination 'stepping stones' between the populations to help the bees to reach all the flax-lilies and keep this important endangered species going. Intervention at its best!



# Cleaning house on rental efficiency standards

Tenants and landlords are letting the Victorian government know loud and clear that the time is right for energy efficiency standards for rental properties.



**Anne Martinelli**  
Efficiency Campaigner

**VICTORIA MAY HAVE ESCAPED THE** worst of this summer's heatwaves, but the season was still uncomfortable for thousands of tenants.

Margaret\* and her daughter, who rent an uninsulated home in Box Hill, had a house full of guests putting up with 33-degree heat in her living room by the time Christmas lunch was finished – and they hadn't even used the oven.

Margaret says the day was exhausting. "And living with freezer blocks on your tummy and wet towels draped around your head is not terribly conducive to socialising," she adds.

"And of course I'm worried about climate change as well. I don't want to be running the heater or air-conditioner all day if I know all that energy is just blowing straight out the roof."

But help could soon be on its way. The legislation covering Victoria's rental sector is currently being reviewed, and the government has promised to make renting "safer and fairer" by introducing minimum standards for rental properties. This is a great opportunity to bring rental housing up to scratch by requiring properties to meet basic energy efficiency standards before they can be leased.

It seems there's a lot of support for the idea, judging by the response to our current rental standards petition. Within 24 hours of launching, more than 2000 people had signed, and we now have more than 5500 signatures.

Plenty of landlords have joined the call for minimum standards. Among them is Martin\* from Yarraville, who says,

"Keeping your house up to a good standard means that you get respect from the renter. Also, everyone should be entitled to a minimum standard in their home, even if you do not own it."

The government seems to be listening, and its recent options paper canvasses the introduction of minimum standards for health, safety and amenity. But we're concerned that the paper doesn't explicitly mention energy efficiency, which we believe is an essential part of making rental housing safe, fair and affordable.

We'll be keeping up the pressure throughout 2017, giving decision-makers the opportunity to hear first-hand accounts of how efficiency standards can improve life for thousands of households – and reduce carbon emissions.

*\*Names changed for privacy reasons.*

Thanks to everyone – renters and landlords – who have shared their stories with us. We'll soon be showcasing these diverse experiences on our website, to give decision-makers and the general public an insight into the realities of renting and the need for action.

If you haven't already, please sign the petition at [envict.org.au/renters](http://envict.org.au/renters) and share it with your friends.

And if you'd like to get more involved with the campaign or share your renting story, please get in touch at [a.martinelli@environmentvictoria.org.au](mailto:a.martinelli@environmentvictoria.org.au) or 9341-8117.

The property Margaret rents in Box Hill lacks basic insulation







Robin is supporting our work to protect our environment and climate with 'future gift' to Environment Victoria.

# You've cared about the environment all your life

Protect the things that are important to you with a bequest to Environment Victoria.

By leaving a 'future gift' in your Will, you can make sure that Victoria's natural environment is protected well beyond your lifetime and your voice is heard on the issues most important to you.

Your precious gift will help Environment Victoria protect our natural world on your behalf and for future generations to enjoy.

**For more information please call our bequest coordinator John Macdonald on 9341 8109 or email [j.macdonald@environmentvictoria.org.au](mailto:j.macdonald@environmentvictoria.org.au)**



## INTRODUCING JOHN

I'm sure you'll join us in giving a warm welcome to Environment Victoria's newest team member focused on helping achieve our financial independence for the long term our Major Donor and Gifts in Wills Coordinator, John Macdonald.

John worked with child and family welfare organisation Berry Street for the last five years, and also with Florey Neuroscience Institutes-Melbourne University and The Australian Freedom from Hunger Campaign (Community Aid Abroad/Oxfam).

A committed environmentalist in the Dandenong Ranges since 1975, John lives on an 'Environmental Hobby Farm' in an area of botanical significance partly due to its rare butterfly orchids, in Belgrave South.

He first became an Environment Victoria donor in 1988 and has since "come full circle, now working in the trenches."

# Victoria's climate and pollution laws getting stronger



Dr Nicholas Aberle  
Campaigns Manager

**IN FEBRUARY 2017, WE ENTERED A** new era: Victoria is now officially aiming for zero emissions, with the passage of a newly strengthened *Climate Change Act*. The Act which had been wallowing after the Baillieu government gutted it in 2012, now establishes the framework for eliminating greenhouse pollution in Victoria over coming decades.

While the target is to reach net zero emissions by 2050 – quite a bit later than we really need – it is at least a recognition of the path we need to tread. The Act has much else to commend it:

- Five-yearly interim targets to ensure we don't leave the heavy lifting too late;
- Improved accountability and transparency requirements; ensuring

all government agencies are utilising their powers to reduce emissions from the sectors they manage;

- And improving how climate change is factored in by government decision-makers.

Time will tell how the Act is implemented, but there are very positive signs that the Andrews government is taking climate change very seriously. Unfortunately we can't say the same for the Liberals and Nationals, who voted against the new laws.

In recent months the Andrews government has also taken major steps to strengthen the Victorian Environment Protection Authority (EPA).

An independent inquiry into the EPA presented a once-in-a-generation opportunity to modernise a crucial

environmental watch-dog. The government's response was comprehensive, accepting the vast majority of the recommendations, including changing the EPA's focus to preventing harm rather than responding to pollution and giving greater powers to hold polluters to account. Already, an extra \$45 million has been allocated to expand the EPA's work, which will be underpinned by changes to the *Environment Protection Act* in late 2017 or early 2018.

Parliaments pass laws to deal with problems. With a new and improved *Climate Change Act* and work underway to overhaul the *Environment Protection Act*, we're on a course towards fixing some pretty major problems. There's a long way to go, but the law is increasingly on our side.

Victorians are on board with clean energy & cutting pollution...

Why isn't this Guy?

Matthew Guy, leader of the Victorian Liberal Party

Polls show the overwhelming majority of Victorians want our political representatives to address global warming. But recently, Matthew Guy and the Victorian Liberal Opposition have:

- ✗ Voted against stronger climate laws for Victoria in the lower house.
- ✗ Voted against paying solar panel owners a fairer price for electricity they supply to the grid.
- ✗ Argued that the oldest and dirtiest coal power station in the country should keep on polluting.

Authorised by M Wakeham, CEO, Environment Victoria, Level 2, 60 Leicester Street Carlton, 3053.

environment victoria

Ad published in the local newspaper of Matthew Guy's electorate of Bulleen.

4 out of 5 Victorians support renewable energy...

Our viral video was seen by 60,000 people

Victorians are on board with clean energy & cutting pollution...

Why isn't this Guy?

Matthew Guy, leader of the Victorian Liberal Party

In recent months, the Victorian Coalition has voted against a fairer price for electricity from rooftop solar, and against stronger laws to protect us from global warming.

environment victoria

Our trailer billboard

Thousands of you asked the Victorian Coalition to support our new climate laws and helped shine a light on their attempts to block measures to cut pollution and increase renewable energy – you sent emails, made phonecalls and donated to get this ad in the local paper and this billboard on the road. **THANKYOU!**





**Dear Mark,**  
**Hazelwood's closed – now I want to see a clean, renewable future for Victoria.**  
**Please accept my donation of:**

(All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.)

☐ \$100   ☐ \$250   ☐ \$500   ☐ \$1000   ☐ Your choice \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please find enclosed: ☐ Cheque or ☐ Money Order (payable to Environment Victoria Inc.)

Or please debit my credit card: ☐ Visa   ☐ MasterCard   ☐ Amex

Cardholder's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Card number:

☐ Please send me info about how I can make a gift to Environment Victoria in my Will.

☐ Please send me info about how I can support Environment Victoria with a monthly gift.

Are your personal details correct on your letter? Or are you moving soon? Please update your personal information here if necessary.

#### PERSONAL DETAILS

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Suburb: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_ Home: \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form, cut off this page and return it to **Reply Paid 12575, A'Beckett Street, Melbourne, VIC 8006** or visit **[www.environmentvictoria.org.au](http://www.environmentvictoria.org.au)** and make your donation online. **Thank you for your generosity!**

Personal information is collected to process donations, issue tax receipts and keep you updated about our work. Please contact us at the address below if you wish to limit the use of your personal information or stop receiving direct marketing material from Environment Victoria. Our privacy policy is available at [environmentvictoria.org.au/privacy](http://environmentvictoria.org.au/privacy) and outlines how you can access or correct your personal information, who we disclose your personal information to (including overseas recipients) and how you can lodge a complaint





Thanks to wildlife photographer and Environment Victoria supporter Doug Gimesy for this amazing flying fox image. You can see more of his work at [gimesy.com](http://gimesy.com)

## WHO'S WHO AT



Chief Executive Officer  
**Mark Wakeham**

### CAMPAIGNS & PROGRAMS

Campaigns Manager  
**Nicholas Aberle**

Healthy Ecosystems Campaigner  
**Juliet Le Feuvre**

Safe Climate Campaigners

**Cat Nadel**

**Anica Niepraschk**

Efficiency Campaigner

**Anne Martinelli**

Community Organising

Campaign Manager

**Jane Stabb**

**Taegan Edwards**

Community Organising

Campaigner

**Adele Neale**

**Emma Horsburgh**

Communications Managers

**Alex Merory**

**Greg Foyster**

Communications Officer

**Cam Wheatley**

### OPERATIONS

Finance Manager

**Kate Rogers**

Accounts Officer

**Jing Lu**

Office Manager

**Cate Hoyle**

Administration Assistant

**Sharon Hargreaves**

Fundraising Director

**Jonathan Storey**

Fundraising Officer

**Heather Bruer**

Major Donor and

Gifts in Wills Coordinator

**John Macdonald**

Database Officer

**Karly Roolker**

### BOARD

President

**Emma Humann**

Vice-President

**Kate Colvin**

**Paul Bailey**

**Peter Christoff**

**Elaine Montegriffo**

**Tabatha Fulker**

**Sue Davidson**

**Ben Krasnostein**

**Tim Watts**

### REGULAR VOLUNTEERS

Environment Victoria would like to thank our amazing crew of regular volunteers, who are now too numerous to mention.

### TALK TO US

Phone (03) 9341 8100

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Authorised by M. Wakeham, CEO,  
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